



THE REDEMPTION PROJECT

INMATES GOT TALENT



Indiana Prison Uses Talent Contest to Rehab Offenders

(Inspirational unscripted film recently completed, which includes actor/rapper Ice-T)

Indianapolis, IN (May 3, 2010) – Doin’ Time Entertainment LLC, in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC), announced today that it has used a creative approach toward reducing recidivism, a talent contest to rehabilitate offenders at one of Indiana’s prisons. The experience was recently captured in a powerful and entertaining unscripted film, **The Redemption Project: *Inmates Got Talent***, which was produced at Putnamville Correctional Facility, a medium security facility in Putnamville, Indiana. Following private screenings with the IDOC, the film was fine-tuned and just completed. It includes various offenders who acknowledge their past crimes, but are committed to being productive, law-abiding citizens upon their release from prison.

At Putnamville Correctional, producer/director/co-creator Johnny Collins and co-creator Joel Jerome interacted with offenders in a unique, dramatic and ultimately comedic fashion in an effort to help them turn over a new leaf so that they can become productive members of society. In the process, Collins and Jerome ultimately organize a talent contest as a way to rehabilitate the prison's inmate population.

The talent contest included performances by a few established comedians (Steve Wilson - *Comedy Central Live at Gotham* and *D.L. Hughley Radio Show*, Edwin San Juan – *Showtime Pacific Rim Comedy*, comedian and former inmate Michael “Big Mike” Mitchell, comedians Johnny Collins and Joel Jerome); as well as numerous offenders who want to pursue singing,

comedy and acting as a way to live successful, crime-free lives. Actor/rapper Ice-T contributes on-camera commentary and some voice-over.

Commissioner Edwin G. Buss of the Indiana Department of Correction commented, “The concept of reformation, redemption, and rehabilitation through the use of comedy was introduced to those who auditioned, and the hundreds of offenders who watched the talent show. Indiana’s recidivism rate has continually declined for the past three consecutive years. The IDOC defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of the offender’s date of release from a state correctional institution. We are taking great strides to use conventional and unconventional methods, such as this unique form of rehabilitation, to help offenders adopt better habits and become productive, law-abiding citizens.”

Commissioner Buss added, “We were impressed with the ability of Johnny and his team to get the offenders to open up about their lives, admit to past sins and in the process find hope to stay on the right path in life.”

Doug Garrison, Chief Communications Officer for the Indiana Department of Correction, who also appears in the film, commented, “This film is about redemption. It’s a unique documentary that is very entertaining, but also conveys a strong message to encourage offenders to successfully re-enter society.”

Aaron Reason, an inmate who participated in the project and was recently released from Putnamville Correctional stated, “This was a great opportunity, as it gave me a chance to think about the bad things I’ve done and look forward to the good I’ll do now that I’m out of prison. While I certainly would not have thanked Putnamville Correctional when I went in, I see now that it has made me a better person and I can contribute to society in a better way. And I can’t wait to see this movie. I know it’s going to be awesome.”

Producer/Director Johnny Collins commented, “We are mindful of the fact that inmates are incarcerated to pay a debt to society. And considering that, our film does not glamorize prison in any manner. We

produced a product that reflects a progressive approach toward connecting with, and rehabilitating convicts. We are committed to making a difference in the lives of convicts who want to redeem themselves. Entertainment is our “therapeutic solution.”

Collins added, “The U.S. Justice Department reports, 'If recent incarceration rates remain unchanged, an estimated 1 of every 15 persons (6.6%) will serve time in a prison during their lifetime.' We are committed to reverse that trend. Through marketing this film, we hope to educate the public about life in prison, demonstrate that there is talent and that some offenders are determined to use their singing, comedic and acting talents to reform their way of life.”

To view and download b-roll footage and photos from The Redemption Project: Inmates Got Talent, which can be used by media and journalists in developing their news stories visit www.inmatesgottalent.com/media

A portion of the net proceeds generated from the sale of The Redemption Project: Inmates Got Talent merchandise will be donated to the Indiana Department of Correction for its rehabilitation programs and to the United Way of Central Indiana’s Youth as Resources program, which involves youth as problem solvers in the community, helping them avoid making bad choices that could lead to a life of crime.

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For more information contact:

Doug Garrison, Chief Communications Officer
Indiana Department of Correction
317.232.5780
dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov

Johnny Collins, Producer/Director
Doin’ Time Entertainment LLC
310.497.9205
johnnycollins2009@yahoo.com